



Hope

The Anchor For My Soul

A 12 DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE
TO RESTORING HOPE

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Hope The Anchor For My Soul {12 Day Devotional Journey to Restored Hope}
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Day 1

“but those who hope in the Lord, will renew their strength.” Isaiah 40:31

Hope. Such a powerful word in those four little letters. We think we can live without it. Oh, but friend, we can't. Without the hope that tomorrow will be different, we sink further and further into despair.

The Word of God is full of snippets of hope...glimpses of glory...bits of truth and wisdom by which our soul comes alive. We were born for hope.

My heart is to share these verses of hope with you, not to be the one with all the answers, but to point you to The Answer for all hope.

Hope is a person.

Jesus.

Day 2

"Though he slay me, yet I will hope in him." Job 13:15

The story of Job is often one we use when a friend is suffering. We know his story, we know his thousands of animals {livelihood} were destroyed, his children were killed, you might say his everything was gone.

Yet, we read the above words from Job 13:15, we see that in spite of losing everything, Job continues to hope in the Lord.

How is that possible?

What is his secret?

How does he keep the hope when all around him is destroyed?

Job had friends that turned out to be not-so-helpful in the advice department. Just like Job, we often have people in our lives that want to give advice. Sometimes these friends are full of godly wisdom, but sometimes, they aren't.

So, his friends weren't his magic potion.

I believe it was Job's perspective that gave him hope in the midst of the storm.

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised." Job 1:21.

Notice Job said this in chapter 1. He didn't have to be talked into hope. He didn't have to be persuaded. Hope was alive in his soul.

Just because we have hope doesn't mean that we are happy-happy-joy-joy all the time. Job suffered a great loss, there is grief in that, for sure. Sometimes much grief.

But, he never lost hope.

Day 3

Job praised the Lord and proclaimed “yet I will still hope” after his everything was stripped away from him. We see that despite great loss, he had hope.

In looking at why Job still had hope {even though he grieved the loss of his family} we see that his perspective and attitude was to praise the Lord no.matter.what. The Lord gives and takes away, but Job still blessed His name.

I think this shows us that *what we place our hope in* plays a great role in whether we can hold onto that hope or not.

In our human flesh, it is impossible for us to be joyful, hopeful, perfectly peaceful 100% of the time. But, look at the key to our hope in Psalm 42:5.

“Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God.” Psalm 42:5

God gives us the key to hope in this passage. *Himself.*

Put your hope in God.

Seems simple enough, right? Should be a quick fix. Three simple steps to finding hope in God!

Wrong. Nothing about our faith walk is “three simple steps.” There is always more of Jesus to be had. There is always a closer walk, another verse to cling to, another truth to grasp.

So, how do we place our hope in God?

Day 4

Yesterday we read the passage from Psalm 42, here it is once again. In fact, this would make a great verse to memorize, claim, pray and speak aloud to your soul!!

"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God." Psalm 42:5

If you've been a believer a long time, you may think this is elementary knowledge here. Oh, but sweet friends, elementary knowledge still has to make its way deep into our hearts!!

Think for a moment with me...when you wake up in the morning, what do you look most forward to? When you walk in the door to your home after being gone for several hours or days, what lights up your face? What might you receive in the mail that would change your entire attitude? When you are having a hard time and struggling with something, what do you do to make yourself feel better?

I think there are many times that we place our hope in things {other than God} but don't even realize it!

Some of these false-hope-givers would be:

- Family
- Marriage/spouse
- A great job
- A pay increase
- An unexpected inheritance
- A coffee drink to brighten our day
- Chocolate to ease the rough day

Hear me loud and clear, precious ones, none of these things are wrong in and of themselves. But, when we begin to look forward to the gifts more than we thank the Giver, our hope is displaced.

Where is your hope today?

Day 5

What exactly does it look like to place our hope in GOD and not in His GIFTS? This is a tough question and one that must be answered individually. I cannot look into your heart and tell you what your hope is placed in. But, the God of the universe can! Spend time with Him, ask Him to search your heart and show you the things that have taken too much importance in your life. He is faithful to draw us to Himself!

If we keep reading in Psalm 42 verse 5, we will see another piece to the hope puzzle.

"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God."
Psalm 42:5.

The Psalmist acknowledges here that his soul is downcast and disturbed. Yet the next sentence is a truth that will give a glimmer of hope even in the midst of suffering.

"I will yet praise Him..."

When our world is falling apart, are we still able to genuinely praise Him? When nothing makes sense, can we still find joy in the Lord and in the gift of salvation? If we lost everything in our world, could we, like Job, still say, *"though he slay me, yet I will hope in him?"*

I think it's important to remember that just because we have hope doesn't mean all our pain is taken away. Let me say that again for you.

Just because we have hope in the Lord, we aren't exempt from pain and suffering. We can have hope in the midst of the suffering.

Reminding ourselves of that truth – that hope in the Lord doesn't exempt us from pain – actually gives us hope.

Day 6

So, when our world is falling apart, how do we remind ourselves that our hope is in God? And how does that make a difference in our lives?

There are, indeed, many ways to find our hope in Jesus. It is my hope {and my joy} to share a few of my favorite ways with you in the next few pages!!

"Say to God, 'How awesome are your deeds!'" Psalm 66:3

If you are desperate for a glimmer of hope in your world, if all seems to be falling apart, I have a simple, time-tested and proven method for finding at least a glimmer of hope. It is found in the verse from psalm 66.

Count your blessings. Speak words of praise and thanksgiving to the Giver of all good gifts.

Having trouble finding something to be thankful for? Start with the very breath you just took. And the next. And the next. "Breathe in grace, exhale praise." Words from the song *Never Once* by Matt Redman.

You've heard it said that we must choose joy. It's true of hope, also. Sometimes, taking one tiny step ~ thanking God for the smallest thing ~ leads to taking another step, and another..,and before you know it, your hope has returned.

What started as one small "thank you" whispered in the dark, becomes the Hallelujah Chorus when hope bursts alive in our soul.

Reading the book, *One Thousand Gifts*, by Ann Voskamp, changed my perspective on giving thanks. Giving thanks isn't something to be done only in November each year. Giving thanks is a way of living.

Start today. Begin and finish your day by thinking of at least 3 things you're thankful for each time. Write them down. Name them one by one. Get up tomorrow and do the same thing.

Day 7

Have you already jotted down what you're thankful for today? If not, take a few moments and add to the list you've started.

I believe it is one of God's greatest blessings to learn that a truly grateful heart can change a life. Being thankful, in the big and in the small, can restore hope.

In addition to keeping that list, I hope you will consider taking some of the verses in these devotions and memorizing them. Scripture memorization is another of my favorite ways to see hope restored in my heart.

I have a verse that I would recommend you starting with. This verse has radically changed my thinking. Now, before you think that I got my act together and never struggled after I memorized this verse, be reminded of the truth that faith in God has no easy formula.

While there is no formula, I believe God honors our discipline and our heart that desires to be intentional when it comes to Scripture memory. He has given us His very Word...to have, to pray, to speak, to memorize, to dwell on. Take hold of the hope found in His Word!

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things...And the God of peace will be with you." Philippians 4:8-9.

This verse is packed full of wisdom and encourages us to place our minds on things true, noble, right, pure, lovely and admirable. Think about these things. Then, what is promised us? The God of PEACE will be with us. God is telling us that choosing to place our thoughts on what is good and true will help fill us up with more of Him.

It is a challenge, to be sure, for this negative thinker to choose to dwell on what is good. But, God is so gracious and day by day, He is giving me new glimpses of Himself through His Word, and those glimpses of my Savior? They bring hope.

Day 8

I've shared two of my biggest secret-hope-restorers with you thus far: 1) counting & naming my blessings and 2) Scripture memory.

Today I want to share another of my favorites for restoring hope.

I shared with you how vital God's Word is to our hope, our peace, our joy. But, digging in even deeper is my other secret weapon: the book of Psalms. I have spent the past several years praying one psalm per day. The Lord has grown in my heart such a love for these psalms, these songs, these prayers. Right in the heart of God's Word is the ultimate prayer guide.

I thought I would share a few simple examples just to get you thinking along the lines of praying the Psalms.

Lord God, you tell me in Your Word that the blessed man is the one who takes delight in the law of the Lord, that on that law he meditates day and night. May I be like the blessed man in Psalm 1. May my delight come from You and Your Word, from You alone. Help me to meditate on Your Word day and night. Then, you tell me, I am blessed. {taken from Psalm 1.}

Father God, how majestic is Your Name in all the earth. When I consider the heavens, the earth, all of Your glory all around me, I cannot help but think, who am I that you would love me? Who am I that you are mindful of me? But, You are. Thank You, Lord, for being mindful of me. How majestic is Your Name in all the earth! I praise You! {taken from Psalm 8.}

Lord, You are my shepherd, I have everything I need because of you. You give me rest in green pastures, you lead me beside quiet waters, you restore me!! You guide me on the path of righteousness. Even though I walk through dark days, I will fear no evil because You are always with me! Surely goodness and mercy will be with me always – because of You!! Thank You, Lord Jesus. {taken from Psalm 23.}

Day 9

Restoring hope is possible, friend! Do not lose heart! Create your gratitude list, dig in and memorize God's Word, pray the Psalms...do those things as often and frequently as you can! While you are in times of despair, don't let God's Word be allocated to your morning routine, let it fill your day. I promise, God still speaks and comforts and encourages through His Word, even in the year 2014.

There is a passage that I want to share with you today that is also a great one to memorize. In fact, I would not be surprised if you already have it memorized because it is so popular that it has almost become cliché. But, don't stop reading. ☺

If you've had this verse memorized for years and years and years, before you recite it quickly in your mind, can you recall the word HOPE being in this verse?? Maybe not. That little tiny word is kind of overlooked at times when someone is mentioning this verse.

"I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

But, don't stop there, friends! Go on, read the next part of that passage!!

"Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:12-13

The Lord declared to Jeremiah that He not only had plans for him, but that he had a plan to give him hope!! If that doesn't excite you, I don't know what will!! The Lord has planned and purposed to give me hope. And, when He gives us that hope...it gives us the courage to call upon Him, to come and pray to Him, and He listens to us!!

You know what that is?? A cycle...we cry out to Him, He gives us hope, He makes our hearts desire to call on Him and pray to Him even more!! God is so gracious!!

Day 10

Friends, we have been on this journey to restore hope for 10 days now. Are you feeling a glimmer yet? Even a speck of hope?? I pray so, dear one!!

Today I am blessed to share with you my very favorite Scripture passage of all time!! Whew! And that is saying a lot coming from one who has prayed, cried, memorized and clung to the Psalms for several years now out of pure desperation!

"I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this call to mind and therefore I have hope. Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." Lamentations 3:19-23.

I named my blog after this passage because I need the reminder every day...even moment by moment...that His mercies really and truly are new every single morning.

Did you blow it with your kids yesterday?

His mercies are new every morning.

Did you receive a diagnosis that you can't even comprehend?

His mercies are new every morning.

Did your spouse walk out the door with packed bags?

His mercies are new every morning.

Did your heart burst into a million pieces from a loss?

His mercies are new every morning.

No matter what the world says, no matter what your circumstances may be, no matter the feelings you have, you are not forsaken. The God of all hope is still God and when we place our hope – even that tiny bit that you think you can't find – in Him, He is faithful to grow that little bit of hope into more.

He is faithful to restore our hope, friends. His mercies truly are new every single morning. Praise Him!

Day 11

"May those who fear you rejoice when they see me, for I have put my hope in your word." Psalm 119:74

Psalm 119 is one of my favorite Psalms because it convicts, challenges and encourages me to spend more and more time in God's Word. The truths and comfort He gives us through His Word truly are endless. We can return to His Word time and time and again and He will never run out of that fresh, living water to quench our thirst.

This particular verse, verse 74, tell us that the Psalmist was placing his hope in God's Word. This Psalm encourages me to do the same.

Look back to verse 2. If you are looking for BLESSING, God tells us in His Word that we will be blessed when we seek Him with all of our heart. How do we seek the Lord? In prayer, in His Word, in striving to be like Him, in knowing Him, in loving Him.

Speaking of praying the Psalms, I have memorized and prayed verse 5 many times...and it truly is the cry of my heart. My guess is, if you are reading these devotionals, that this prayer will be the cry of your heart as well!

"Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees." Psalm 119:5

Yes, Lord, may it be so. May my heart be STEADFAST in following You, in obeying You, in believing You, in trusting You, in finding my hope in You!!

Keep reading, Psalm 119:11 tells us another powerful reason to memorize Scripture, I'm sure you remember this verse – but be reminded of why I pointed out Psalm 119 to begin with – because the Psalmist placed his hope in God's Word. May we do the same!! And one way we can do that is by memorizing, "I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You."

Lord, you have given us such powerful truths that turn our hearts to Your Word. Make us steadfast in obeying You, following You, searching out Your Word and resting in Your hope.

Day 12

I have struggled with depression off and on for 8 years now. To say that I have felt hopeless would be an accurate statement. I understand what it means to not see an end in sight, to not feel even a glimmer of hope that tomorrow will be better. One of the worst things about the depression that I struggled with is that it seems to zap any hope in me at all. There were days I literally felt like {and believed with every part of me} that I would struggle for the rest of my life. The thought of struggling for the rest of your life, well, that can be a very hopeless feeling.

Don't hear me say that I think God always has it in His plan to heal and to eliminate suffering. I do not believe that. There are too many instances in Scripture where God left thorns {Paul,} allowed suffering {Job,} and heard the cries of anguish {David.} Yet, when God calls David a "man after my own heart" hope fills my heart. These men weren't perfect. They were vessels for the God of the universe to show Himself as God. God does the same in us, through us and for us. We can look at these broken men and have hope for ourselves.

Hear my heart, oh, dear one. Despite the struggles, I have hope. Because my hope is not in my circumstances, my hope is in God. My hope is not in the fact that one day I may not struggle with depression. My hope is in the God of the universe who called me His own, sent His son for me and is preparing a place for me to live with Him eternally. My hope is in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." Hebrews 6:19

Dear beloved child of God, as you read these words, I'm praying for you. I'm praying that the God of all hope will meet you somewhere in these pages and restore your hope. Because He can and He will. You are loved!!

Bonus Content

“Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness – the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”
Colossians 1:24-27

Paul is sharing part of his testimony here and what he has suffered for the sake of the gospel. He wants to share with the people the mystery of the gospel, particularly among the gentiles, that our hope is Christ in us. Even the Gentiles could take hold of this hope! This hope, Christ in us, is for all!!

Friends, without Christ in us, we have no hope. But, think about it the other way around – when we have Christ, we have hope.

That, dear ones, is the hope that doesn’t die, never stops, doesn’t give up, and never is based on your actions or your circumstances. That hope is built on the solid rock, the sure foundation of Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday, today and forevermore.

Christ alone is why we don’t have to worry that our hope will fail us. Christ alone is why we don’t have to fear that we haven’t done enough to deserve it. Christ alone is the reason for our hope, it doesn’t depend on us – and that alone gives my heart such hope!! I don’t have to do more, be more, do better or be better. My hope is in Christ. Christ alone.

If all around you is falling apart, remind yourself of this truth: Jesus will never fall apart. He is the Solid Rock on which we can, with confidence, place our hope. And, when He lives within us, as His children we can cling to that hope because we know He is faithful.

Jesus is our Hope.

Digging Deeper Into God's Word

If you are seeking to dig deeper into the heart of God concerning hope, I have listed some verses below that you may wish to read, memorize, pray over and meditate on!

Job 13:15

Psalm 33:20-22

Psalm 42:5

Psalm 62:5

Psalm 119:74

Psalm 130:5

Proverbs 13:12

Isaiah 40:31

Jeremiah 29:11

Lamentations 3:19-24

Romans 12:12

Romans 15:13

Colossians 1:27

Titus 1:2

Titus 2:3

Hebrews 6:19

Hebrews 10:23

Hebrews 11:1

Thank You!

Sweet friends, I'm thrilled that we have spent this time digging into God's Word to hear what He says regarding hope. I have prayed over each person that will read these words. It is the cry of my heart that your hope be restored. I know that desperate feeling...I'm praying that the Lord will use these words to minister to your soul.

I hope you will come over to my little place on the web from time to time for more encouragement!

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